

Right Place. Right Size.

Locations announced for Project Pop-Up 2014

Entrepreneurs can apply now for expanded program, which features 11 properties in six towns

DOVER, Del. (July 23, 2014) – The success of the second annual Project Pop-Up made it clear that the entrepreneurial spirit was alive and well in Delaware, as five individuals opened businesses in brick-and-mortar locations throughout the state.

It also showed that there was room for growth, and that there was a contingent of people who wanted the opportunity to make their entrepreneurial dreams a reality.

Downtown Delaware and the [Delaware Economic Development Office](#) have heeded these calls for expansion, stretching Project Pop-Up 2014 to include 11 commercial properties in six towns throughout Delaware, including Middletown, Milford, Milton, Seaford, Smyrna and Wilmington. (For details and photos, visit the [Project Pop-Up website](#).)

Entrepreneurs can apply now to be considered as the recipient of three months of rent-free commercial space during the holiday season and the assistance of a business advisor from the move-in phase to the grand opening and beyond. The program, now in its third year, also aims to stir economic activity by locating these early-stage, home-based or expanding businesses in refurbished properties that were once vacant.

Diane Laird, DEDO State Coordinator for Downtown Delaware, said the fact that Project Pop-Up grew from two new businesses in 2012 to five in 2013 shows that the program works.

“Since Project Pop-Up’s inception, we’ve seen entrepreneurs receive the confidence, community support and financial jump-start they needed to launch their business in a stand-alone location,” Laird said. “We’ve also seen these new businesses provide a spark for economic development in cities and towns throughout the state, as many of them have secured long-term leases after the initial three months.”

The success stories from last year’s Project Pop-Up include Royal Treatments, a home décor and window treatments business. After nearly a decade operating the business out of her home, owner Karen Gill was inspired to move into a Pop-Up location in Smyrna after hearing about the program.

“Having three months to get started and knowing a business advisor would be there to assist gave me the courage to take my business out of my home and into a retail location. Our store in downtown Smyrna is everything we could have hoped for and more,” Gill said. “If you have your own business and want to take it to the next level, Project Pop-Up is for you.”

John Lehne left a series of uninspiring jobs to chase his passion of being a personal trainer. He turned that passion into a business after hearing about Project Pop-Up. Lehne now operates 302 Fitness, a personal training studio and small group workout center, on Milton's Union Street.

"I can't say enough about the support I've received from the Project Pop-Up business advisors. While I am operating the business as a sole proprietor, I feel like I always have a team of people who can help when I need it," Lehne said. "This has been an amazing experience and I'm looking forward to growing my business."

Paige Deiner opened Milford Massage, Wellness and Yoga after a career change from a reporter to a massage therapist and Reiki instructor. In a matter of months, she quadrupled her business, compiling in one day what she used to bring in over a week. The unexpected growth required a move to a new location on North West Front Street, where she offers massage, Reiki, yoga and self-development classes.

"Project Pop-Up was a game changer for me. It allowed me to dream, and dream big," Deiner said. "As success followed success, I was awed by the support, kindness and inspiration that the people who work with Project Pop-Up gave me. I had extremely knowledgeable cheerleaders, who guided, informed and encouraged me every step of this amazing journey."

Gill, Lehne and Deiner all signed long-term leases, as did Theo Morgan, owner of Computers Fixed Today in Dover, and Dr. Bill Shearer and Mary Van House, owners of Milton Wellness Center of Delaware.

Delaware supports entrepreneurs and small businesses at every phase of development, promoting the advancement of business plans through programs such as [Start It Up Delaware](#) and helping individuals take ideas to the next level through the Kauffman FastTrac Program, said Alan Levin, Director of the Delaware Economic Development Office.

"Project Pop-Up motivates entrepreneurs to take advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity by providing them with a safety net of financial security and business support," Levin said. "Small businesses are crucial to Delaware's economy, and Project Pop-Up is making a huge contribution by launching start-ups in vacant properties throughout the state. DEDO is proud to once again be part of this successful program."

[Applications](#) will be accepted from small business owners through Wednesday, **Aug. 6, 2014**. A panel of representatives from DEDO, Downtown Delaware, and participating communities will review applications to select the best qualified applicant for each space.

One qualified business owner will be selected for each participating property and will be notified by **Aug. 28**. In preparation for opening the business, winners will participate in a one-on-one consultation with a business coach between **Sept. 9-13** to ensure likelihood of a

successful launch of the business by **Oct. 1**, and then continued running of the business.

For additional details, visit www.dedo.delaware.gov/popup.

About the Delaware Economic Development Office

The Delaware Economic Development Office is an executive state agency responsible for attracting new investors and businesses to the state, promoting the expansion of existing industry, assisting small and minority-owned businesses, promoting and developing tourism and creating new and improved employment opportunities for all citizens of the State. Visit dedo.delaware.gov.

About Downtown Delaware

Downtown Delaware, a program of the Delaware Economic Development Office, provides Delaware's historic downtowns, communities, and small businesses with tools to revitalize their commercial districts, increase entrepreneurial opportunity, and enhance quality of place. To learn more about the Main Street program, visit www.delawaremainstreet.com.

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